The Ghost of Clytemnestra in the *Eumenides* : Ethical Claims Beyond Human Limits

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THE GHOST OF CLYTEMNESTRA IN THE *EUMENIDES*: ETHICAL CLAIMS BEYOND HUMAN LIMITS

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Abstract: The Ghost of Clytemnestra is the first afterlife figure in extant Greek literature to call for vengeance instead of ritual burial. She goads the Erinyes to kill Orestes in order to rectify the wrongs she has suffered. Yet the living Clytemnestra has already proven manipulative, politically usurping, and murderous; her Ghost attacks her own son. Further, the Ghost's lack of substance (as *eidōlon*, *psychē*, or *onar*) distances her from the living world. On what ethical grounds, then, does the Ghost base her claims? How can a character so far beyond the boundaries of societal norms demand serious ethical consideration?

I. INTRODUCTION: CLYTEMNESTRA'S REAPPEARANCE AND ETHICAL APPEALS

AT THE END OF THE *CHOEPHOROI* Orestes kills his mother, Clytemnestra, and displays her corpse to humans, gods, and the theatrical audience as proof of his just vengeance (*Ch.* 973–1006). In an eerie reversal at the start of the *Eumenides*, Clytemnestra reappears onstage, bearing the wounds of her murder, to demand vengeance against Orestes. Like the living queen, the Ghost of Clytemnestra marshals rhetoric to effect action in the world, rousing the sleeping Erinyes as her proxies by reciting a multitude of wrongs concerning her dishonor and suffering (*Eu.* 94–139).[1] The Ghost

[1]The "Ghost of Clytemnestra" (shortened to "Clytemnestra" or "the Ghost" when the context is clear) refers to this figure for consistency, although this is not the term used in the Greek text, on which see (Section II) below.

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thus extends Clytemnestra's character and claims beyond the presumed closure of her life.

Yet so much interferes with audience members, readers, and scholars heeding her arguments:[2] first is her identity, for the figure onstage is the afterlife remnant of the deceptive queen who turned on her husband, children, and state, and whose killing Apollo himself had sanctioned. Audiences may be inclined to dismiss her claims as unworthy of consideration,[3] for they belong to an irredeemably villainous character who has been condemned by an oracle and whose murder furnishes the plot of the *Choephoroi*.[4] By contrast, within the *Eumenides* her claims *are* treated seriously: the Erinyes take up Clytemnestra's claims for vengeance in their pursuit of Orestes. They subsume her position into their more general ethical imperative by insisting that retribution for kin-murder is a pillar of justice and that letting Orestes go unpunished threatens the order of mankind. As the *Eumenides* progresses, though, Clytemnestra's stage presence and arguments fade: while Orestes remains onstage with his divine champion, Apollo, the Ghost of Clytemnestra disappears. The Erinyes' universal arguments during Orestes' trial no longer resonate with Clytemnestra's personality or claims.[5] When the Erinyes succumb to Athena's new justice, accept a place of honor in Athens, and release Orestes, they ignore the consequences for the very one who invoked them. No voice speaks for Clytemnestra.

Returning critical attention to the Ghost of Clytemnestra will demonstrate that dismissing her based on these two (contradictory) reasons misses the compelling ethical challenges she poses. The ominous, inventive Clytemnestra returns from the dead precisely to *defy* the quashing of individual claims based on a notion of the larger social order, even one that is divinely supported. Her Ghost's continuing demand for vengeance, moreover, extends the salience of ethical questions past the endpoint of

[2] There is a surprising paucity of scholarship on the Ghost of Clytemnestra. The most influential analyses of Clytemnestra pay the Ghost and her particular issues little or no attention, e.g., Betensky 1978, Rabinowitz 1981, Vellacott 1984b, Goldhill 1984, Neuburg 1991, McClure 1999, Foley 2001, and Vogel-Ehrensperger 2012. Winnington-Ingram 1948, 141, may provide a clue to the neglect: "Clytemnestra has a speaking part in the *Eumenides* also, but the short scene in which her ghost upbraids the sleeping Furies tells us little about Clytemnestra living."

[3] On Greek tragic audiences, collective and individual, responding to ethical issues in tragedy, see Segal 1996 and Easterling 1996.

[4] Clytemnestra loses the *agon* with Orestes physically and this, momentarily, seems proof of the triumph of his arguments (*Ch.* 894–930), see Foley 2001, 230–2.

[5] Bacon 2001, 48–57; Winnington-Ingram 1948; and Vogel-Ehrensperger 2012, 309–27.

life. She invokes her individual honor after death and hints at an underworld society, both notions that the political finale of the trilogy fails to address. This article, consequently, focuses on the manifold provocations against normative values specific to the status and claims of the Ghost of Clytemnestra.

A recurrent structure is necessary to dissect her fraught and thematically interconnected rhetoric. What is the Ghost's relation on the one hand to the living Clytemnestra and on the other to the afterlife from which she emerges?[6] A close reading of the Ghost passage uncovers a set of linguistic and ideational problems in her speech, which provides a framework for further analysis. Two brief sections follow to contextualize the main arguments: The first introduces the ethical issues presented in this article. The second sketches Greek cultural perceptions of the dead and afterlife figures, and addresses the two most relevant literary precursors, the Homeric ghosts who make demands on the living (Patroclus in *Iliad* 23 and Elpenor in *Odyssey* 11). The analysis then revisits the question of the Ghost's status in the afterlife, interweaving it with how she constructs her arguments. The first thematic section contrasts the two Homeric ghosts, who seek burial, with revenant Clytemnestra's call for vengeance. The next section addresses the Ghost's description of her disgraced afterlife, which she twists into an argument for the Erinyes' intervention in the living world. The last section focuses on the stakes of her ethical claims. It contrasts these with key scenes from Aeschylean drama, especially other ghosts in the *Oresteia* and the Ghost of Darius in the *Persians*. The conclusion elucidates the extraordinary challenges to ethical thought posed by the indomitable specter of Clytemnestra.

II. THE RHETORIC AND THEMES OF THE GHOST'S CLAIMS

The Ghost of Clytemnestra affects the living world through her language alone; she invokes demonic agents rather than herself attacking or haunting Orestes. The rhetorical claims she uses to activate the Erinyes must first be unpacked sequentially since she reinforces them through repetition and shifts the meanings of her terms over the course of the speech (*Eu.* 94–103):[7]

[6] Vogel-Ehrensperger 2012, 308, puts this forth as a general, unanswered question: "Kann sie in diesem letzten Auftritt noch als menschliches Selbst beurteilt werden oder ist ihre Individualität als Lebende nun als tote Schattenfigur aufgehoben?"

[7] All citations follow the OCT (Aeschylus, Page 1973; *Il.*, Monro and Allen 1920; and *Od.*, Allen 1917). All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.

Κλυταιμήστρας Εἴδωλον

εὕδοιτ᾽ ἄν, ὠή· καὶ καθευδουσῶν τί δεῖ;
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ὑφ᾽ ὑμῶν ὧδ᾽ ἀπητιμασμένη
ἄλλοισιν ἐν νεκροῖσιν, ὧν μὲν ἔκτανον
ὄνειδος ἐν φθιτοῖσιν οὐκ ἐκλείπεται,
αἰσχρῶς δ᾽ ἀλῶμαι. προυννέπω δ᾽ ὑμῖν ὅτι
ἔχω μεγίστην αἰτίαν κείνων ὕπο.
παθοῦσα δ᾽ οὕτω δεινὰ πρὸς τῶν φιλτάτων,
οὐδεὶς ὑπέρ μου δαιμόνων μηνίεται,
κατασφαγείσης πρὸς χερῶν μητροκτόνων.
ὅρα δὲ πληγὰς τάσδε καρδίᾳ σέθεν·

The Eidōlon of Clytemnestra

You would be asleep! Hey! And what use are you sleeping?
I, thanks to you, having been dishonored thus
among the other dead—the reproach of those I killed
never ceases among the perished
and shamefully I wander. And I proclaim to you that
I am blamed the most by them.
Having thus suffered appalling things at the hands
of my nearest kin,
not one of the divinities is wrathful on my behalf,
although I have been slaughtered by matricidal hands.
See these wounds in your heart!

Even from the first two words of the transmitted Greek text an important issue ought to provoke scrutiny of Clytemnestra's status: it is uncertain how to name the figure onstage. Although scholars frequently refer to this character as "the Ghost of Clytemnestra," the text does not: of the available terms in Greek for soul, phantom, or dream, the primary medieval manuscript labels the character Κλυταιμήστρας Εἴδωλον, "the *image* of Clytemnestra."[8] The term εἴδωλον is common in Homer, in conjunction with other terms for the dead.[9] It occurs, however, only three times in the

[8] Laurentianus XXXII 9, labeled Mediceus (M) by Page 1973. The manuscript stage directions refer to the Ghost of Darius in the *Persians* as an εἴδωλον as well, which may indicate a later convention. Since, however, εἴδωλον is not how the characters refer to these figures it provides a textual starting point for examining the terminology actually used.

[9] Vernant 1991, 186–8, defines three kinds of supernatural apparition denoted in Homer by the term εἴδωλον, all of which are actual doubles of a human being, rather than products of the imagination: the phantom, *phasma*, created by a god in the semblance of a living person; the dream, *oneiros*, considered to be a sleep apparition sent by the gods as an image of a real being; and the souls of the dead, *eidōla kamontōn*, phantoms or images

text of Aeschylus, only once in the *Oresteia* (*Ag.* 839), and not at all in this scene.[10] What then, is the proper term for this reappearance of Clytemnestra, instead of "image"? The ancient label (εἴδωλον) suggests the effectiveness of the dramatic delay before she announces her name and that she is appearing in a dream (ὄναρ) at verse 116. This is more than 20 verses after she begins speaking. Up until that point the audience is necessarily unclear about her state: Is she a ghost able to act in the world? Is she a powerless image whose words will go unheeded? The cryptic beginning to the scene should not be ignored on its own terms. Uncertainty at the start as to the status and power of the Ghost is a component of the scene's aesthetics and the background for her polysemous rhetoric.

From her opening words and appearance among the snoring Erinyes, it is evident that the Ghost of Clytemnestra's primary dramatic function is to wake them.[11] The scene revolves around this function: she chastises them for sleeping (*Eu.* 94), continues her reproaches as they snore (118–39), and disappears forever when they awaken (140). The revenant Clytemnestra is, however, much more than a fantastic alarm clock for the Erinyes. In their chase and prosecution of Orestes they are her surrogates in the living world, since she appears powerless over human beings. Yet it is crucial to distinguish her from them, due to the claim sometimes made that she is an Erinys herself, or their master.[12] This would overemphasize her supernatural status and assimilate her arguments to theirs.[13] Although she lets loose these "hounds of vengeance" (e.g., *Ch*. 924), she does not control them, as is seen by their eventual renunciation of her cause. She is still the remnant of a human being, now limited in her effect on the physical and demonic world to persuasive words alone.

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of the dead, which exist in the afterlife and are called *psychai* as well; cf. Rohde 1925, 3–26 and 156–235; Vermeule 1979, 8; and Burkert 1985, 190–8.

[10] In the *Ag.* εἴδωλον is used metaphorically to describe social relations as "the image of a shadow." The other Aeschylean uses are not decisive: one is attested in a fragmentary satyr play (Radt, 78a, 6). The other is at *Pr.* 568, where Io uses it to refer to either an image or phantom of the dead Argos haunting her as a gadfly, although Sommerstein 2008a, following M. Schmidt, excises the phrase that includes εἴδωλον.

[11] While the precise staging of the character is unknown, the situation is clear. On Clytemnestra's appearance and the debate over her staging, including whether she was staged at all, see Sommerstein 1989, 100–1, n. 94–139, and 102, n. 103.

[12] Clytemnestra's Ghost is occasionally described *tout court* as an Erinys (Rabinowitz 1981, 170) or as their leader (Vogel-Ehrensperger 2012, 308; and cf. Anderson 1932, 313–19).

[13] Clytemnestra in the *Ag.* stops just short of calling herself an Erinys, although she invokes Justice, Ruin, and the Erinys (Ερινύν, *Ag.* 1433) who was her helper, and later claims to herself be the "ancient, bitter avenging spirit" (ἀλάστωρ, *Ag.* 1501) of the house, a claim the Chorus dispute (*Ag.* 1505–8); see Foley 2001, 211–34, arguing against Neuburg 1991.

The humanity of the Ghost of Clytemnestra underlies several of her claims to vengeance. The first is her assertion of the Erinyes' transgression against her honor (*Eu.* 95–6): "I, thanks to you, having been dishonored (ἀπητιμασμένη) thus among the other dead." The Ghost of Clytemnestra appropriates ideas of honor and dishonor from the living world and applies them to a general conglomeration of the dead (ἄλλοισιν ἐν νεκροῖσιν, "among the other dead," 96; and ἐν φθιτοῖσιν, "among the perished," 97). Within this group she specifies that those she killed (ὧν . . . ἔκτανον, 96) maintain persistant and damaging accusations against her. She reinforces the notion of continuing social relationships by referring to blame (ὄνειδος, 97; cf. ὀνείδεσιν, 135) and shame (αἰσχρῶς, 98). Nevertheless, she does not take responsibility for the causes of her dishonor, but uses it to chastise the Erinyes. She continues to build up foundations for her—still unstated—claims with the allegation that none of the divinities care about a mother slain by her own child (πρὸς χερῶν μητροκτόνων, 102). Clytemnestra thus embeds her afterlife dishonor, shame, and blame within the framework of social and kinship bonds.

The connection with her previously living body enables the Ghost to focus attention on her wounds (πληγὰς τάσδε, 103) as marks of the crime against her. When rolled onstage in the previous play, her corpse might have been clothed in this same bloody costume (*Ch.* 973–1006). In that case the wounds would have represented the results of offstage violence.[14] Their appearance on the Ghost of Clytemnestra, however, now compels questions about their physical status: in what way, precisely, are these "wounds"? Are they marks visible on her corpse, or image, or costume? The phrase "see these wounds in your heart" (ὅρα δὲ πληγὰς τάσδε καρδίᾳ σέθεν), moreover, exposes the problems that physical vision presents when applied to supernatural viewers and a spectral object. Does the Ghost intend for the Erinyes to see the wounds in their sleep, when they still seem unaware of her, or when awake? The Ghost's language and her liminal status involve issues of corporality and spectatorship, which complicate the claim for vengeance that she derives from her wounds.

While appealing to divinities to requite sacrifice is standard in Greek ritual, the Ghost of Clytemnestra here incites the Erinyes to chase Orestes by a shaming procedure (*Eu.* 106–16):

[14] On the staging of the corpses of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, see Garvie 1986, lii–liii.

ἦ πολλὰ μὲν δὴ τῶν ἐμῶν ἐλείξατε,[15]
χοάς τ᾽ ἀοίνους, νηφάλια μειλίγματα,
καὶ νυκτίσεμνα δεῖπν᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἐσχάρᾳ πυρὸς
ἔθυον, ὥραν οὐδενὸς κοινὴν θεῶν·
καὶ πάντα ταῦτα λὰξ ὁρῶ πατούμενα,
ὁ δ᾽ ἐξαλύξας οἴχεται νεβροῦ δίκην,
καὶ ταῦτα κούφως ἐκ μέσων ἀρκυστάτων
ὤρουσεν, ὑμῖν ἐγκατιλλώψας μέγα.
ἀκούσαθ᾽ ὡς ἔλεξα τῆς ἐμῆς περὶ
ψυχῆς· φρονήσατ᾽, ὦ κατὰ χθονὸς θεαί.
ὄναρ γὰρ ὑμᾶς νῦν Κλυταιμήστρα καλῶ.

Surely you have lapped up many things of mine indeed:
wineless drink offerings, sacred appeasements,
and night-holy meals over a hearth of fire
I sacrificed, at an hour shared by none of the gods.
And all these things I see trampled underfoot,
and he has gone, escaped just as a fawn,
and what's more, lightly from the midst of nets
he darted, greatly mocking you with squinting eyes.
Hear me, as I have spoken for my very
soul! Mind it, O underworld goddesses,
for in a dream, I, Clytemnestra, now call you!

The Ghost uses deliberately unsolemn vocabulary (ἐλείξατε, "you have lapped up," 106; and λὰξ . . . πατούμενα, "trampled underfoot," 110), mixed with sacred language (ἔθυον, "I sacrificed;" and νυκτίσεμνα "night-holy," 108). This verbally reproduces the Erinyes' double nature, as both demons enforcing gruesome punishments (*Eu.* 70–2, 186–97, and 385–8) and holy, ancient divinities (393–6). The sacrifices, chthonic in nature, ought to refer to those meant to ensure Clytemnestra's vengeance against Agamemnon.[16] Yet the Ghost of Clytemnestra now seems to regard her previous sacrifices as having created a general obligation for the Erinyes to support her, which she turns against her son. Their failure to fulfill their duty reemphasizes her earlier criticism of the shortfall in divine concern (101). This disrespect is evident in the Ghost's accusation that the underworld goddesses themselves are trampling on sacred ritual (110). The metaphor

[15] I exclude the deeply suspect verses, 104–5; cf. West 1990 and Sommerstein 1989, *ad loc.*

[16] The goddesses are underworld divinities (κατὰ χθονὸς θεαί, 115), while the sacrifices are at night (108), "at an hour shared by none of the gods" (109). Compare her sacrificial language at *Ag.* 1384–98 and see Rynearson 2013, 10–11; and Zeitlin 1965, 474–83.

reverses the previous instances of trampling in the trilogy, in which humans debased items belonging to the gods.[17] Honor and dishonor are at stake as well in Orestes' "mocking" the Erinyes (ὑμῖν ἐγκατιλλώψας μέγα, 113) and thus disrespecting Clytemnestra as well.

The previous references to vision become a marked motif of the Ghost's speech in this passage: the unusual verb for mocking (ἐγκατιλλώψας), has squinting (ἰλλός) and seeing (ὀπ-) roots.[18] It reinforces the unusual but only subtly marked synesthesia of seeing in one's heart (ὅρα . . . καρδίᾳ, 103) and connects with the Ghost metaphorically seeing (ὁρῶ, 110) her sacrifices trampled underfoot. This motif intensifies in the climactic verse 116, as the Ghost of Clytemnestra signals via the word ὄναρ that she herself knows that she is in a dream of the Erinyes.[19] "Dream" finally answers the question of how to label this iteration of Clytemnestra's stage character. It also opens the door to comparisons—within the *Oresteia* and with other texts—between dreams, images, and ghosts.

Speaking for herself is vitally important for the Ghost of Clytemnestra, since her only advocates are temporarily incapacitated. It also differentiates her from other undead mentioned in the *Oresteia*. Characteristically, Clytemnestra's words become potent speech acts: in the three verses that begin to disturb the Erinyes she calls on them to listen (ἀκούσαθ', 114) and pay heed (φρονήσατ', 115), and emphasizes her own speaking (ἔλεξα, 114) and calling (καλῶ, 116). That she has spoken on behalf of her own *psychē* (ἔλεξα τῆς ἐμῆς περὶ ψυχῆς, 114–15) marks the stakes of her ethical claims, yet is also a deeply ambiguous reference: is the *psychē* her life, her image onstage, her disembodied soul in Hades, or a combination of these? Each possibility has different implications for the grounding of her claims and the consequences of completed vengeance for her continued existence.

Although presumably the audience could easily intuit the identity of the figure onstage through her costume and speech before verse 116, the Ghost of Clytemnestra's dramatic announcement of her own name (Κλυταιμήστρα) builds on the status she held in life as a queen and the

[17] Agamemnon trod on the sacred fabrics (*Ag.* 904–74) and Cassandra stripped herself and trampled on the sacred robes that marked her as Apollo's prophet (*Ag.* 1264–70); cf. Sider 1978, 15–17.

[18] Sommerstein 1989, *ad loc.* Cf. Chantraine 1968–80 and Beekes and Beek 2010 on the ocular associations of ἰλλός in addition to the ὀπ- root (under ὄπωπα).

[19] This is the adverbial use of ὄναρ, "in a dream," (cf. *Eu.* 131, below) as Smyth 1926; the LSJ, 2.II; and Sommerstein 1989 translate. There are those who translate ὄναρ appositively, "as a dream" (cf. *Ag.* 82), e.g., Podlecki 1989 and see Goldhill 1984, 215.

power she has exerted as the central manipulator in the first play and the object of vengeance in the second. Her high status, in turn, grounds the dishonor she claims to suffer in the afterlife (95). Clytemnestra's name couples with and reinforces her invocation (ὑμᾶς . . . καλῶ, 116) of the Erinyes, in the final position in this speech, just before they begin to whine. But her self-naming moment foregrounds an ethical problem as well, that of continuity between her living character, the inanimate corpse onstage in the previous play, and her reanimated, speaking figure. The issue raised by the "I" who makes claims and its relation to the living or dead world is one that requires precise parsing.

As the previously silent Erinyes start moaning onstage—demonstrating already the efficacy of the Ghost's language—she continues to urge them on (*Eu*. 117–28):

Χο. (μυγμός)
Κλ. μύζοιτ᾽ ἄν· ἀνὴρ δ᾽ οἴχεται φεύγων πρόσω·
†φίλοις γάρ εἰσιν οὐκ ἐμοῖς† προσίκτορες.[20]
Χο. (μυγμός)
Κλ. ἄγαν ὑπνώσσεις, κοὐ κατοικτίζεις πάθος·
φονεὺς δ᾽ Ὀρέστης τῆσδε μητρὸς οἴχεται.
Χο. (ὠγμός)
Κλ. ὄζεις, ὑπνώσσεις· οὐκ ἀναστήσῃ τάχος;
τί σοι πέπρωται πρᾶγμα πλὴν τεύχειν κακά;
Χο. (ὠγμός)
Κλ. ὕπνος πόνος τε κύριοι συνωμόται
δεινῆς δρακαίνης ἐξεκήραναν μένος.

Chorus: (*whine*)
Clyt.: You would be snoring! But the man has gone, fleeing far;
[For suppliants are not devoid of friends.]
Chorus: (*whine*)
Clyt.: You are too drowsy, and you do not show compassion
for suffering;
But Orestes, the murderer of this mother, has gone.
Chorus: (*moan*)
Clyt.: You moan, you drowse—will you not quickly get up?
What affairs have been assigned to you except to
produce bad things?
Chorus: (*moan*)
Clyt.: Sleep and toil, powerful conspirators,
have drained the terrible serpent of wrath.

[20] OCT *desperatus*.

The Ghost attempts to invoke the Erinyes' pity (κοὐ κατοικτίζεις πάθος, 121), a somewhat ironic move thanks to her nearly simultaneous appeal to their evil function (125). The pathos (πάθος, 121) she describes doubles her previous reference to suffering (παθοῦσα, 100), although it remains unspecified if this pain stems from the original betrayal by Agamemnon, being killed by Orestes, being hounded by the dead in the afterlife, or all three. She specifically emphasizes that Orestes murdered her as his mother (φονεὺς . . . τῆσδε μητρός, 122), cycling back to her mention of "matricidal hands" (χερῶν μητροκτόνων, 102). The rhetorical recurrence to previous themes and language links the Ghost both to the living Clytemnestra's incantatory rhetorical technique and to the Erinyes' repetitively binding dance and obsessive harping on their dishonor.[21] The deictic in the phrase "this mother" (τῆσδε μητρός, 122) also moves the frame of reference to her non-dream self, since it refers to the biological mother that she was when living. Like the deictic in "these wounds" (πληγὰς τάσδε, 103), it represents a facet of the vacillation of frames of reference between the presence of the one who was wronged and the absence inherent in her appearing in a dream and not having a biological body. Moreover, it continues the ethical problem surrounding Clytemnestra's motherhood from the *Choephoroi*. What do the types of distance from the living world that Clytemnestra's death, appearance in a dream, and continuing abdication of her ethical accountability as a mother do to her own language of presence and obligation?

Although she is decidedly human, many references within this speech yoke Clytemnestra thematically to the Erinyes. In the *Choephoroi* Clytemnestra had a snake dream that linked the dead Agamemnon as chthonic dream-sender to Orestes as dream-interpreter and fulfiller (*Ch.* 523–50).[22] In this *Eumenides* passage, Clytemnestra is the dream (116) and describes her avengers as a snake (δεινῆς δρακαίνης, 128), tethering their chthonic state to her own.[23] She urges them to perform their assigned office or duty (πέπρωται πρᾶγμα . . . τεύχειν κακά, 125)—the verbs do the work here, indicating that the Erinyes have a specific, unchangeable function to which she appeals. This raises the question of how Clytemnestra's claims

[21] On Clytemnestra's *telos* prayer or binding song in *Ag.* 958–74, see McClure 1996. Note the Erinyes' verbatim repetition of long stanzas, *Eu.* 778–92 = 808–22 and 837–46 = 870–80 (the line numbers do not correspond in the OCT); cf. Rosenmeyer 1982, 284–310 and 343.

[22] On Orestes as fulfiller of the snake prophecy, see Rabinowitz 1981, 168; and Roberts 1985, 283–97.

[23] Lebeck 1971, 14; and Rabinowitz 1981, 168–72.

relate to the transformation of the Erinyes' avenging, outsider position in the old law to a cherished, insider one under the new law. If they can move from murderous, polluted, and dishonored figures to honored ones, why is Clytemnestra never given the opportunity?

As the Erinyes begin to awaken, the Ghost's final lines focus attention on their dreaming, and thus on her own status (*Eu*. 129–39):

> Χο. (μυγμὸς διπλοῦς ὀξύς)
> λαβὲ λαβὲ λαβὲ λαβέ· φράζου.
>
> Κλ. ὄναρ διώκεις θῆρα, κλαγγαίνεις δ᾽ ἅπερ
> κύων μέριμναν οὔποτ᾽ ἐκλείπων φόνου.
> τί δρᾷς; ἀνίστω· μή σε νικάτω πόνος,
> μηδ᾽ ἀγνοήσῃς πῆμα μαλθαχθεῖσ᾽ ὕπνῳ.
> ἄλγησον ἦπαρ ἐνδίκοις ὀνείδεσιν·
> τοῖς σώφροσιν γὰρ ἀντίκεντρα γίγνεται.
> σὺ δ᾽ αἱματηρὸν πνεῦμ᾽ ἐπουρίσασα τῷ,
> ἀτμῷ κατισχναίνουσα, νηδύος πυρί,
> ἕπου, μάραινε δευτέροις διώγμασιν.
>
> Chorus: (sharp double whine)
> Get him! Get him! Get him! Get him! Look there!
>
> Clyt.: You are pursuing a beast in a dream, and you bellow
> like a dog never abandoning concern for gore.
> What are you doing? Get up! Do not let toil conquer you,
> nor, soothed by sleep, ignore pains.
> Feel a stab of pain in your liver from just reproaches;
> to the wise they are like goads.
> But you, send after him bloody breath,
> waste him away with fumes, with fire from your insides,
> follow him! Waste him away with a second pursuit!

This interplay between what the theatrical audience sees in the dramatic frame and "dream" is already present with the Erinyes' first articulate words. These indicate that they believe they are actually pursuing Orestes, even mimicking the chase (λαβὲ λαβὲ λαβὲ λαβέ, 130), while they are still lying asleep onstage. One can almost hear the disgust in Clytemnestra's line, "what are you doing? Get up!" (τί δρᾷς; ἀνίστω, 133) The Erinyes' φράζου ("look there!" 130) is a deictic indicator that picks up on and complicates the present-absent dynamic and visual themes of the Ghost's language, since they are pointing out an unseen Orestes as if he were visible to them. When the Ghost complains that they are pursuing a wild beast within one dream (ὄναρ διώκεις θῆρα, 131) from which she, another dream (ὄναρ, 116), is trying to wake them, she indicates to the audience

that two dreams are occurring simultaneously. Moreover, she is exhibiting a remarkable degree of self-awareness concerning her status within this doubly problematic dream-state.

When they do awaken, the Erinyes refer to Clytemnestra as the "reproach from dreams" (ὄνειδος ἐξ ὀνειράτων, 155), which sums up the Ghost's effective goading in one condensed expression. The strong assonance of the phrase draws attention to Clytemnestra's own use of these terms (ὄναρ, 116 and 131; ὄνειδος, 97). Their use of the plural, "dreams" (155) has multiple possible referents: it could simply stand for the singular, could refer to dreams each Erinys was seeing, or could refer to the double dream of Orestes escaping and Clytemnestra chastising. As we will see below, the layered and uncertain references to dreams and their link to reality is in line with other passages in the *Oresteia*. It is less possible to untangle them, I will argue, than to recognize that they double the Ghost's problematic physical state and draw attention to her tenuous arguments.

The dynamics of Clytemnestra's body play out inversely to the Erinyes' embodiment. They were only abstract references in the *Agamemnon* and invisible in the *Choephoroi*. Their embodiment is a central theme in the *Eumenides*, and its effects manifest themselves in this Ghost passage, where they are both visible for the first time and temporarily prevented from fulfilling their function. Sleep is not only a physical impediment, but, the Ghost warns, its mollifying quality could also undermine their obligations: "nor, soothed by sleep, ignore pains" (134). These pains are either hers (again appealing to her sufferings in life or in the underworld) or their own, since she hurts the Erinyes by means of goading accusations (135–6). Their possible softening and pain derive from the fact that the Erinyes are now staged; their avatars give physical referents to otherwise metaphorical language. This is especially true in the mixture of non-physical ideas with body parts in the command to "feel a stab of pain in your liver from just reproaches" (ἄλγησον ἦπαρ ἐνδίκοις ὀνείδεσιν, 135), and is possibly behind the references to "fumes" and "fire from your insides" (138–9), as well as "seeing in the heart" (103).[24] Their physical presence, speech, and insistence on their rights are the foundation for the appeasement through persuasion and honors that Athena initiates. The Erinyes themselves at one point also declare a surprisingly middle-path attitude in an often-quoted passage (*Eu.* 526–30), and at the end,

[24]Throughout the rest of the *Eu.* they are described with the language of interior organs, which connects in part to their blood-slurping animality and in part to the pains they feel when confronted first by Clytemnestra and then Athena, e.g., *Eu.* 158–9, 248–9, 264–6, 782 = 812, 840–2 = 873–5.

of course, add positive blessings to their functions. These aspects of their later character might then connect to the bizarre non sequitur in this passage, when the Ghost avers that reproaches are goads for the *wise* or *moderate* (σώφροσιν, 136).[25] Either adjective seems entirely out of place as a possible description of the Erinyes in this scene. The irony is all the more apparent as the Ghost of Clytemnestra is in the midst of urging them to shrivel her son up with bloody breath (137). The incongruity in Clytemnestra's speech serves as a brief hint of things to come, but also differentiates the Erinyes from her, the one who is never appeased.

III. ETHICAL APPROACHES

The Ghost demands blood-for-blood vengeance, in line with the living Clytemnestra's justification after her murder of Agamemnon. To interpret the substance and dynamics of her pleas, it is crucial to conceptualize them in ethical terms.[26] Despite the paranormal circumstances, the Ghost builds her claims on human foundations: shame, personal honor, motherhood, and divine wrath for familial crime, all of which are imbricated with the ethical concerns of the trilogy.[27] An audience attentive to the perspectives and claims of characters in the play ought—when these touch on social norms and ethical matters—to consider her case.

How does one locate the Ghost's arguments in ethical (or moral) frameworks?[28] In terms of scope, discussion of ethical issues in literature may attempt an interpretation on a range of scales: from a whole genre (such as "tragedy"), to that of an author or work (e.g., assessing the

[25] This is not to ignore Porter 1990, who rightly warns against the dangers of interpreting early cruxes in the *Or.* by reference to later passages. The intention is not to claim clarity, only draw attention to a larger structural pattern.

[26] Foley 2001, 202–3 and n. 3, emphasizes the serious ethical responsibility of vengeance as the background for living Clytemnestra's claims. She cites the emphasis on Orestes' deliberation in the *Ch.* as evidence that vengeance is presented as a grave ethical issue; cf. Vellacott 1984b, 63–75.

[27] Zeitlin 1965, 482–3, examines how Clytemnestra is first justified in avenging her lost child and then loses that justification, in part through the predatory behavior against her own children. On the changing meanings of human and divine justice in the *Or.*, see, e.g., Kitto 1961, esp. 90–5; Gagarin 1976, 66–73; Goldhill 1986, 35–9; and Sommerstein 2010, 193–202.

[28] Her ethical claims could also be termed "moral" since they are a culturally contingent—but still general—prescription of what agents "must" or "ought" to do. For this way of framing the term "moral," see Harpham 1992, 3. Annas 1992 summarizes the differences between ancient ways of writing about ethics and modern ways of thinking about "morals," as well as the lack of general agreement as to what differentiates these terms.

ethics of Aeschylus or the *Oresteia* as a whole), down to the perspective of one character (e.g., Agamemnon's decision at Aulis), or a combination of these. In the case of Clytemnestra's Ghost, the personal perspective predominates, both in her emphasis on herself and because she is outside the community of the living. Nevertheless, her references to her honor and social forces among the dead are crucial to understanding the dilemmas stemming from her undead state. The *Oresteia*, moreover, is a relentlessly interconnected text, thematically, linguistically, and philosophically, and therefore the Ghost's rhetoric must be examined against other ghosts and ethical claims throughout the trilogy. Some must be traced beyond, to other Aeschylean plays and their evident precursors in Homer.

Conjoined with the dramatic situation, analyses of ethics in Greek tragedy must carefully attend to the notion of "character," since dramatic figures are constructs of the play's language and limited stage action. Factors comprising a dramatic figure's "character" include the Greek cultural notion of *ethos* (e.g., whether inherited or affected by a divinity) and the roles a figure plays in particular circumstances (such as "king" versus "father" in Agamemnon's dilemma).[29] Underlying these understandings of "character" as a person is the issue of the continuity of a staged figure from one scene to the next, what they know in each scene, and whether they are psychologically coherent or merely vehicles for the action.[30]

What is the point of listening to the Ghost's ethical claims? What does this, now dead, murderous character have to contribute to ethical thought? To begin to frame an answer one must inquire about whether Greek tragedy can serve as a template for normative ethics.[31] Some thinkers attempt to draw general ethical insights from literature, including tragedy.[32] Formally speaking, such readings entail socially normative assumptions. Among these, albeit often unstated, are the requirements for agents to act within relatively stable social structures and to work to

[29] On tragic character, see Gill 1990, and 1996; and Lawrence 2013, esp. 15–18.

[30] See Easterling 1990, 83–92, on disagreements concerning the nature of dramatic characters and on the different levels of interpretive codes audiences use to understand performances.

[31] Altieri 1998, 31–3, categorizes ethics in literature via the perspectives of different audiences: how individuals evaluate motives and actions in texts, how readers imagine or converse about their assessments, and how readers and critics link to discourse about morality by professional philosophers.

[32] Nussbaum 1986, 1–15, while recognizing the reversals of fortune and irreconcilably conflicting imperatives by which Greek tragedy presents its moral dilemmas, is nevertheless a prime modern example of generalizing from tragedy to the everyday.

maintain them.[33] Greek tragedies, however, often undercut the societal structures within them and thus challenge precisely such foundational premises.[34] Tragic scenes of ethical deliberation consistently occur at moments of crisis for the agent and follow societally toxic transgressions. Kin murder and subversions of the state are common throughout Greek tragedy. Moreover, in tragedy, as in epic, supernatural forces often pressure human agents in ways that affect ethical claims, whether with alterations of mental states, signs interpreted as divine demands, or direct commands.[35] Contextually significant factors—such as the abnegation of family relations or a divine imperative to kill—warp the usual circumstances in which humans face ethical dilemmas. They thus bedevil any abstraction into ethical rules for conventional situations, and possibly even for dealing with grief and crisis. The particularities and extreme elements of tragic situations mean that discussions of ethics in tragedy rely on conscientious parsing of the dramatic context. In the case of the living Clytemnestra, the ethical questions, from the outset, concern situations beyond acceptable social confines.[36] Her confrontations with society are the key to her living character's tragic, ethical importance.[37]

[33] Rachels 2009, 413–22, offers a brief introduction to 20th-century ethical theory. Narveson 2010 provides a recent representative example. The categories of normative theory focus either on determining what is best for society (consequentialism), the obligations of duty (deontology), or understanding how a virtuous actor would approach a dilemma (virtue ethics). This relationship of agent to society may also underlie some of the articulations of the ethics of Levinas (e.g., 1987), though he often frames ethics as an infinite obligation to the always separate, unknowable Other.

[34] The recognition of the exceptional character of tragedy and the tragic hero goes back to Aristotle in the ancient world and Schelling at the beginning of modern philosophical approaches to tragedy. Useful surveys of philosophical theories of tragedy are Young 2013 and Szondi 2002.

[35] For example, Calchas in the *Ag.* interprets the omens at Aulis as the demand of Artemis, which the choral song indicates is the foundation for Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice his daughter (*Ag.* 184–247). The vast debate concerning the ethics of Agamemnon's decision includes Greene 1943; Lloyd-Jones 1962; Lesky 1966; Peradotto 1969; Edwards 1977; Nussbaum 1986, 25–50; Griffith 1991; and Lawrence 2013, 71–83. In the *Ch.* Apollo's oracle directly commands that Orestes avenge his father, even though it is reported in Orestes' words and he shows some doubt (e.g., *Ch.* 269–305). For Orestes' moral deliberation see, among others, Zeitlin 1965, 496; Peradotto 1969, 258–61; Vellacott 1984a, 145–57; and Lawrence 2013, 89–100.

[36] Foley 2001, 207–34, analyzes the living Clytemnestra's dangerous questioning and subverting of the cultural assumptions of male dominance—sexual, political, linguistic, and violent.

[37] Gill 1996, 94–174, analyzes the "problematic hero" (e.g., Achilles and Medea) as a critic of societal norms. The hero acts in a way that may seem to be extremely self-centered

It will become evident that the Ghost of Clytemnestra intensifies those challenges to normative constructs by breaking with so many aspects of life itself.

Central to the discussion of the afterlife issues the Ghost raises, the continuity of a human after death strains the framework of most ethical analysis. Radically other concerns arise, such as what might affect the welfare of an individual's continued existence as a disembodied soul, or how post-mortem divine punishment might redefine actions within a different ethical schema than that operating in life.[38] Claims on behalf of the dead also implicate the uncertainty of relations between life and an afterlife that is inaccessible to the living. Just such appeals to justice for dead family members recur in scene after scene in the *Oresteia*, often with bloody consequences.[39] Further issues, even paradoxes, emerge when the claims are made *by* the dead themselves. In Clytemnestra's case, they present a non-standard ethical situation from a new perspective, that of a dead individual facing the consequences of living action.

How are the bases for the Ghost's claims affected by her status as a dream and as an afterlife figure? How does her rhetoric and description of her underworld state square with the speech of the living queen, a self-admitted dissembler (*Ag.* 1372–3)? The Ghost's standing as an ethical figure is subverted so comprehensively that her character draws attention to the assumptions of normative ethics. Since the Ghost of Clytemnestra is no longer biologically alive, lacks contact with living human beings and a stake in human politics, yet has some continuity in the afterlife, her desire for retribution diverges from the claims of other characters in the trilogy, as well as from those of the Erinyes. A return to her rhetorical methods and the dynamics of her status as a dream will demonstrate how

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(subjective) since s/he violates agreed upon ethical codes (sometimes horrifically, as with Medea's murder of her children), but nevertheless exemplifies ethical notions of other sorts.

[38] For modern philosophical approaches to death and the afterlife, see Moore 1981 and Kagan 2012. See Shilo 2013 on ethical problems raised by different perspectives on the afterlife in Greek tragedy and how Plato reworks each one for philosophical questioning of values; cf. North 1992.

[39] The Chorus of the *Ag.* recount citizen anger stemming from soldiers returning as ashes from Troy (*Ag.* 429–74); the living Clytemnestra invokes Iphigeneia in the underworld and the Fury of the murdered to justify her killing of Agamemnon (e.g., *Ag.* 1412–20 and 1525–9); Aegisthus recounts the tale of dead Thyestes and his brothers (*Ag.* 1583–1603), who are visible to Cassandra as ghosts (*Ag.* 1095–7 and 1217–22); the mourners of Agamemnon present his dishonor in Hades and in the tomb as a reason for vengeance against Clytemnestra (*Ch.* 354–62); and Orestes promises action on behalf of Athens from beyond the grave (*Eu.* 762–77).

each problematizes her claims. The combination of afterlife and socially problematic tragic elements is precisely the unique ethical challenge the Ghost of Clytemnestra presents.

IV. MATERIAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND

Contemporary Greek cultural and literary treatments of afterlife figures help contextualize some of the Ghost of Clytemnestra's exceptional features. Greek concerns about the dead focused on memorialization and propitiatory rituals.[40] In Athens, for which we have the best evidence, several civic festivals were explicitly concerned with yearly honoring of tombstones and prophylaxis against spirits who could become angry and affect life (Johnston 1999, 40–70). Rituals could be aristocratic or public, and these were often elaborate affairs in which processions and lament channeled grief and brought groups together, burial goods indicated honor, and markers at the grave focused memory.[41] When the dead were thought to be agitated by a lack of care, such as remaining unburied, they were said to reappear, demanding, in a dream or through an intermediary, some ritual or action to return them to rest.[42]

The mechanisms in Greek culture for the effects of the dead on life blurred the lines between human and divine. For example, heroes, who were conceived of as the powerful spirits of dead individuals, were local (unlike the gods) and had shrines throughout the landscape where they received ritual cult.[43] In the *Oresteia*, Orestes speaks of himself after death in this way (*Eu.* 762–77). The Ghost of Clytemnestra, however, is not said to haunt Orestes directly, or to continue as a heroine, but rather must activate the Erinyes on her behalf. These chthonic deities from Mycenaean times have only minor cultic presence in Greek religion, but are widely invoked in Greek literature, especially Homeric epic and the *Oresteia*, as demons who enforce cosmic balance through vengeance.[44]

[40] For Greek beliefs concerning the afterlife, see Vermeule 1979; Vernant and Vidal-Naquet 1972; Vernant 1989, 1991, and 2001; Sourvinou-Inwood 1995; Johnston 1999; Bremmer 1983 and 2002; and Edmonds 2015.

[41] On death rituals, see Alexiou 2002, esp. 4–7; cf. Oakley 2004.

[42] The haunting of survivors by the unburied and the apotropaic rituals against ghosts are analyzed in Johnston 1999, 9–10 and 38–81. On the need for burial and death ritual in the archaic and classical age, see Sourvinou-Inwood 1995.

[43] Rohde 1925, 115–38; Burkert 1985, 203–8; Kearns 1989; Bremmer 2006, 15–20; and Parker 2011, 103–23.

[44] Sewell-Rutter 2007, 79–109; and Brown 1983.

The Ghost of Clytemnestra scene, by featuring both her animate spirit and the Erinyes, combines the generally familial and civic concern with ritual burial and a more universal ethical notion of justice for the dead.

In terms of cultural ideas of the afterlife, it is significant that Hades received little worship, although shrines to him existed (Burkert 1985, 195–201). Certain mystery religions—such as the Orphic, Dionysian, and Eleusinian (which had a festival connected with Athens)—offered an improved fate in the afterlife.[45] In Aeschylus' time, however, there was no shared, clear picture of the afterlife in cult, nor widespread belief in ethical judgment after death.[46]

The Homeric afterlife is the most relevant literary precursor for the *Oresteia*.[47] Homer's afterlife descriptions contain elements of two notions: the idea that the physical body continues in limited ways below competes with a version of an immaterial soul in *Odyssey* 11.[48] Homeric afterlife figures also contrast with the concerns, physical status, and rhetoric of Clytemnestra's Ghost. The Ghost of Patroclus (*Il.* 23.62–107) is Clytemnestra's most obvious precursor in surviving literature: both appear in the dream of their addressee (Achilles and the Erinyes respectively), begin their rebukes of the sleepers with the same verb (εὕδω), and describe their suffering in the afterlife to motivate the addressee's actions in the living world.[49] Patroclus is called a *psychē* ("soul"), yet he does not refer

[45] Graf and Johnston 2007; Edmonds 2004 and 2011; and Bernabé, Cristóbal and Isabel 2008.

[46] Homer only describes penalties for great sinners and rewards for those connected with the gods. The *Hymn to Demeter* presents the first reward or punishment for ordinary people's actions in life, which is connected to ritual (the Eleusinian Mysteries), not morality. Pindar's brief and vague mention of afterlife punishments and rewards (*Ol.* 2.56–82) is more along the lines of moral or ethical thinking. Cf. Johnston 1999, 11–12, 31–2 and 98–9; Burkert 1985, 190–208 and 276–301; Albinus 2000; and Edmonds 2015.

[47] Discussion of other versions of the afterlife and of later ghost scenes in tragedy are beyond the scope of this argument, but are fruitful areas for further research. These include the Hesiodic spirits of the dead from different Ages of Man (*WD* 121–6, 140–3, and 167–74) and Herodotus' story of Melissa at the Oracle of the Dead (5.92). Other undead figures in extant tragedies after Aeschylus include Polydorus' Ghost in Euripides' *Hec.* and Achilles' Ghost mentioned within his speech.

[48] See Tsagarakis 2000, esp. 105–23, for the discrepancies in *Od.* 11 between the nearly immaterial, witless soul—correlating to the destruction of the body in cremation rituals—and a more physical concept of the dead interacting with each other and their surroundings in Hades—correlating with inhumation.

[49] Patroclus begins his exhortation to Achilles with the indicative εὕδεις, "you are asleep!" (*Il.* 23.69). Clytemnestra's beginning, εὕδοιτ' ἄν, "you *would be* asleep!" (*Eu.* 94) may be read as a sarcastic optative (Smyth §1826). A systematic comparison between these two ghosts has, as far as I know, yet to be made.

to himself as either a *psychē* or a dream.[50] When, in a poignant moment, Patroclus asks Achilles to give him his hand (μοι δὸς τὴν χεῖρ', 23.75), Achilles' inability to embrace the image instantly exposes the discontinuity between the living Patroclus and his impalpable, shrieking, fleeing *psychē* (23.99–101). This ending to the Ghost scene emphasizes the disparity between the *psychē* and the living person in terms of how both characters conceptualize its corporeality. The *psychē* acts and speaks as if he is still physically cohesive. Achilles, at first, takes the *psychē* for his embraceable companion, yet the action dramatically reveals the *psychē*'s immaterial nature (Vernant 1991, 189). This undead dream scene thus draws attention to the problematics of self-reference and incorporeality after death.

In Homer, when ghosts demand action on their behalf they are concerned with ritual burial, not vengeance.[51] Even though Achilles becomes obsessed with avenging his friend's death, the Ghost of Patroclus does not even mention his killers, but focuses his companion on the immediate fulfilment of the burial that will enable him to proceed through the Gates of Hades (23.71).[52] This is the case as well with the Ghost of Elpenor (*Od.* 11.71–6), who is simultaneously concerned to set up a reminder of his existence for the living.[53] The Ghost of Elpenor explicitly states that his shade would become a supernatural affliction on Odysseus in the living world were he to be left unburied (11.73). Despite such threats, however, not one of the Homeric dead ever manifests power over the living, nor

[50] The *Iliad* poet names the visitation in Achilles' sleep the "*psychē* of Patroclus" (ψυχὴ Πατροκλῆος, 23.65), as does Achilles once he has awakened (Πατροκλῆος . . . ψυχή, 23.105–6). On the other hand, within the dream Achilles addresses the figure as his actual companion (23.94–8), not a *psychē*, nor a dream. The Patroclus figure himself does not use any of the terms *psychē*, *eidōlon*, or *onar* for himself, only for others (ψυχαί, εἴδωλα, 23.72).

[51] Vengeance is entirely suppressed in all instances of the Homeric afterlife, not only in the Patroclus scene. The shade of Agamemnon, for example, narrates to Odysseus Clytemnestra's treachery and his attempt to kill her when he was dying but mentions nothing about vengeance now that he is dead (*Od.* 11.405–56), only asking about the whereabouts of his son (457–61). Yet, at the very start of the *Od.*, Zeus had already spoken of the requital brought by Orestes on Aegisthus (*Od.* 1.40–3); see D'Arms and Hulley 1946 and Marks 2008, 17–35.

[52] That is, the *Iliad*'s scene mainly spurs the fulfillment of a human ritual obligation, only what the culture already considers an imperative. Richardson 1990, 172–3, n. 23, 69–92, puts this in the context of Homeric double motivation.

[53] He is also a *psychē* (ψυχὴ Ἐλπήνορος, *Od.* 11.51) and his ambush of Odysseus before the other dead represents his not having entered the house of Hades proper (Tsagarakis 2000, 33). Beyond the call for Odysseus to remember him long enough to bury him (*Od.* 11.71–2, and cf. *Il.* 23.69), he desires to be objectified in a memorial for those in the future (11.75–6).

do the living show much fear of their threatened vengeance.[54] With this background it is now possible to return, in greater detail, to the Ghost of Clytemnestra's rhetoric, her claims, and their complications.

V. THE DREAM OF CLYTEMNESTRA: PRESENCE, SELF-REFERENCE, AND IMAGE

Like the Ghosts of Patroclus and Elpenor, the Ghost of Clytemnestra articulates her demands rhetorically to the agents who she hopes will fulfill them. By contrast, however, she supports her claims by emphasizing her *presence*, most obviously by linguistically drawing attention to her visible self ("*this* mother," τῆσδε μητρός, *Eu.* 122) and her wounds ("*these* wounds," πληγὰς τάσδε, 103). The intervention of the Ghost of Clytemnestra in the *Eumenides* as a speaking, present, undead figure allows her to break the silence of her corpse onstage in the *Choephoroi*.[55] Yet her speeches proceed to diverge widely from those of the Ghosts of Patroclus and Elpenor, drawing attention to the anomalies of ghostly speech concerning the visible first person, the represented spectral body, and continuity after death.

The first set of such differences concerns self-reference. The Ghost of Clytemnestra uses first-person singulars for her underworld self (e.g., ἐγώ, ἀπητιμασμένη, 95; ἀλῶμαι, 98; ἔχω, 99), her previous living self ("I killed," ἔκτανον, 96), and her current stage-figure ("I declare," προυννέπω, 98). In this she resembles the Ghosts of Patroclus and Elpenor, who conflate their references to themselves as speaker, dead body, and afterlife *psychē*.[56] Neither Homeric ghost, however, mentions his name or current status (whether as a dream or a *psychē*). The figure in the *Eumenides* both refers to herself as Clytemnestra and draws attention to the fact

[54] Hence all the dishonoring of enemy corpses and seeming unconcern for the cremation of common soldiers (Garland 1984).

[55] On a theatrical level, her very reappearance fits the general pattern in the *Or.* of the increasing embodiment of superhuman elements: early in the trilogy, characters invoke supernatural forces as abstractions; then, characters declare that they perceive these forces manifesting their efficacy through visions and signs; last, the forces themselves appear hypostatized onstage and speak; see Lattimore 1953, 13–15; Kitto 1961, 23; Lebeck 1971, 1–3; and Sommerstein 2010, 171–81. On this arc in references to the Erinyes, Apollo, and Athena see Brown 1983, 29–30; and Bacon 2001, esp. 48 and 52.

[56] E.g., Patroclus' imperative (*Il.* 23.71): θάπτε με ὅττι τάχιστα πύλας Ἀΐδαο περήσω. "Bury me as quickly as possible so that I may pass through the gates of Hades!" In this command the Ghost of Patroclus refers to his corpse as himself ("bury me," θάπτε με) and to his underworld existence ("so that I may pass through," περήσω) equally as himself.

that she appears in a dream (ὄναρ γὰρ ὑμᾶς νῦν Κλυταιμήστρα καλῶ, *Eu*. 116). Clytemnestra's multi-layered self-reference in this line invokes the Erinyes in the first person (ὑμᾶς . . . καλῶ) and simultaneously appends self-invocation (Κλυταιμήστρα). Her conjuring of her own presence is only made more eerily potent through her simultaneous understanding of her absence, of herself as a dream.

The Ghost of Clytemnestra convolutes the issue of her presence further when she refers to interrupting the second dream the Erinyes are experiencing: "You are pursuing a beast in a dream" (ὄναρ διώκεις θῆρα, *Eu*. 131). The Ghost, visible to the audience, is commenting on a dream that is invisible to the audience. Her metaphorical use of words for vision within the dream (especially ὅρα . . . καρδίᾳ, 103; but also ὁρῶ, 110; and ἐγκατιλλώψας, 113) only further problematize her effective invisibility.[57] For she is not only both present and absent, as is any ghost, but she is also *unseen by any internal audience.* Unlike the *psychē* of Patroclus or the Children of Thyestes, she never appears to any human beings—not to Orestes nor to the Pythia, who both see the Erinyes—nor even to the Erinyes themselves, who only see Orestes in their sleep, and never address Clytemnestra when they awaken, implying she is already gone. Her *mise en abyme* displacement of presence and visibility puts Clytemnestra at multiple removes from the living, human world.

The Ghost's liminal status as an incorporeal double of a dead, dissembling murderer distills the *Oresteia*'s recurrent problematizing of image as false presence. The trilogy often connects such suspicion with the issue of language as false image.[58] The *Agamemnon*, especially, is glutted with critiques of the veracity of both: the Chorus and Clytemnestra in dialogue equate the "phantoms of dreams" (ὀνείρων φάσματ', *Ag*. 274) with divine deception (δολώσαντος θεοῦ, 273), with "the (vain) belief . . . of a slumbering mind" (δόξαν . . . βριζούσης φρενός, 275), and with "un-winged rumor" (ἄπτερος φάτις, 276). They also connect "dream-appearances"

Through this elision, and by never referring to himself as soul, image, or dream, he treats his formerly living state, his corpse, his underworld self, and his speaking appearance in Achilles' dream as a unified, continuous self.

[57] The problem of supernatural invisibility to human beings occurs several times in the trilogy: Cassandra's vision of Thyestes' children is invisible to the Chorus in the *Ag.* and Orestes sees the Erinyes that the Chorus do not in the final scene of the *Ch.*; cf. Brown 1983. It is a matter of directorial choice whether the audience glimpses these silent figures; the text provides no clues as to their staging.

[58] Goldhill 1984, *passim*, draws out the intricately intermeshed concerns with epistemology, vision, and language in the *Or*.

(ὀνειρόφαντοι, 420) with "(vain) beliefs" (δόξαι, 421) and oppose dreams to the truth (εἴτ' οὖν ἀληθεῖς εἴτ' ὀνειράτων δίκην, 491). Agamemnon, as well, describes deception within the "mirror" of social relations as "an image of a shadow" (κάτοπτρον, εἴδωλον σκιᾶς, 839). Human characters in the *Agamemnon* thus enmesh the language of image with epistemological problems. This is especially evident in the Chorus's anxiety over the living Clytemnestra's verbal fabrication.[59] The taint of dreams and images thus already infects her language, and is redoubled when she herself returns as a dream.

The problematics of image concern the Ghost's ethical argument in part due to her continuity of form. For the Ghost's image relates less to Clytemnestra's living body than to her *corpse*. The Ghost supports her claims by pointing to her wounds as irrefutable evidence for her petition through a verb of seeing and a deictic: "See these wounds in your heart!" (ὅρα δὲ πληγὰς τάσδε καρδίᾳ σέθεν, *Eu.* 103). She thus draws on the oft-repeated ethical claim in the *Oresteia* (before the new law of Athena) that bloodshed necessarily entails further bloodshed. This emphasizes the physicality of the wounds and the liquid drawn from them, a recurrent, fluctuating theme in the trilogy.[60] Yet unlike wounds on a living being, those on the Ghost of Clytemnestra operate as signs without substance, just as subject to her manipulation as language and image.

A ghost scene in the *Agamemnon* allows a clarifying comparison along the lines of image, wounds, and dreams. Cassandra points out the dead children of Thyestes (invisible to the Chorus and, presumably, the audience) with the same verb in the imperative and deictic as the Ghost of Clytemnestra uses for her wounds: "see these children!" (ὁρᾶτε τούσδε τοὺς . . . νέους, *Ag.* 1217–8). Cassandra describes them holding their flesh and innards in their hands (1220–1). These she interprets to be the signs of their murders that demand requital against Agamemnon (1223–38). Yet Cassandra's language stresses that these are only the visions of the children, not their reanimated corpses: she sees them "bearing the forms of dreams" (ὀνείρων προσφερεῖς μορφώμασιν, 1218), although she is not asleep.[61] Cassandra's emphasis on the dead children as images without

[59] Foley 2001, 207, shows that rumors and dreams are spoken of as "women's thinking" in the trilogy; cf. McClure 1999, 74–9. On the living Clytemnestra's problematic speech see Goldhill 1984, esp. 68, 74–5, and 77, and on these themes in her Ghost scene, 213–15.

[60] On the logic of blood for blood in the *Or.* and its connections to other liquids such as dew, milk, libations, and the Erinyes' venom, see Lebeck 1971, 80–91; and Sommerstein 2010, 171–8.

[61] For the relationship of ghosts in the trilogy to sleep and dreams, see Mace 2002 and 2004.

substance and her interpretation of their wounds for vengeance thus provide a template for the *Eumenides* scene.

The Ghost of Clytemnestra, by contrast, is both the interpreter of her own wounds and staged to be visible to the audience. These seemingly minor differences are immensely significant. The wounds from Clytemnestra's violent murder leave stains that her Ghost now uses to *exceed* their intended purpose, the vengeance with which audiences might have sympathized. Near the end of the *Choephoroi* Orestes displays his mother's corpse to humans, the gods, and the theater audience with verbs of seeing (e.g., ἴδεσθε, *Ch*. 973; ἴδεσθε δ' αὖτε, 980; and δείξαθ', 984), and describes the killing of his mother as justice (ἐνδίκως φόνον τὸν μητρός, *Ch*. 988–9; and κτανεῖν τέ φημι μητέρ' οὐκ ἄνευ δίκης, 1027).[62] Perhaps the corpse was then clothed in a bloody costume now worn by Clytemnestra's Ghost.[63] In transporting these brutal marks back from the afterlife, though, the Ghost strips them of the signification Orestes assigned: in her telling, the gory writing on her body recounts none of Orestes' dilemma and plotting, nor any divine justification from Apollo's oracles.[64] Instead, the Ghost treats the wounds as a palimpsest on which she writes her own meaning over Orestes'. The reversal is consummate: whereas the murderer points to the wounds on the corpse, claiming that they are marks of justly completed vengeance, the dream of the murdered now points to the very same marks on herself and counterclaims that it is just to seek vengeance for these wounds.

The complicating factor in this struggle over meaning is that the marks themselves are not actual wounds. In fact, it is precisely the deictics in the phrases "*these* wounds" (πληγὰς τάσδε, *Eu.* 103) that conjoin several levels of representational fiction.[65] Although presumably visible to the audience, the wounds cannot be biological injuries for two reasons: first, as is evident from her placement in a dream, the Ghost of Clytemnestra lacks material substance in the dramatic world.[66] That is, the marks visible on her image alert an audience to the lack of biological wounds even *within* the play; any representation of wounds, even a spray of ruby blood out of a gaping neck, would still fail to designate a human body's

[62] On this display of justice, see Rousseau 1963, esp. 126–7; and Goldhill 1984, 101 and 198–9.

[63] Again, the staging is unknown, but see Sommerstein 1989, 33, 100–1, and n. 94–139.

[64] See, e.g., Vellacott 1984a on the tie between Apollo and Orestes.

[65] On deictics as bridging reality and fantasy, see Felson 2004, 253.

[66] Holmes 2010, esp. 41–83 and 228–74, brings new attention to the issue of the biological body and the possibilities of non-physical action (divine or demonic) that affects it in Greek thought; cf. Williams 1993, 21–30.

wounds, since they are worn by an apparition. This ghostly figure is not meant to be identical with the corpse, but is a dream of the incorporeal dead queen. Her visible wounds are thus superfluous.[67] Since the wounds to which the Ghost of Clytemnestra points with her demonstrative lack substance, the ethical appeal from them is deeply compromised.

One might well suspect this first point: are not the wounds visible on Clytemnestra's Ghost merely a natural extension of the wounds her body suffered at the moment of death? Support for this critique comes not only from the appearance of the Children of Thyestes, but from the precedent of *Odyssey* 11, in which Odysseus tells of encountering wounded and bloody soldiers among the dead.[68] The *Iliad*'s Ghost of Patroclus, however, provides a powerful counterexample. It illustrates that there is no requisite connection between wounds on a corpse and wounds on the dream of the dead. The *Iliad* explicitly states that Patroclus' *psychē* appears like the living Patroclus in body and clothing (*Il.* 23.66–7). In other words, he appears as he was in any other moment of life—any moment but his naked, spear-pierced, battlefield death. Even in Odysseus' underworld, the images of the dead often do not bear the marks of their death.[69] Since the Ghost of Clytemnestra forges an imperative for vengeance in part from the reference to her visible wounds, it becomes important to emphasize that their appearance on her image is by no means literarily or culturally necessary.[70]

The second point concerning the Ghost's wounds is that her appearance in a double set of dreams, and onstage, complicates her argument from the physical even further. Clytemnestra's mention of wounds directs the attention of the *sleeping* Erinyes and the audience to a *costume*.[71] The imperative "see" (ὅρα) initiates a type of vision detached from the normal human experience. This operates at a double remove from literal

[67] They are also not dramatically necessary: "Wounds function as the marks, the evidence or inscriptions, of violence, regardless of whether these wounds are textual, reported, or enacted" (Cawthorn 2008, 22).

[68] "And many men killed in war, having been wounded with bronze spears, wearing their blood-stained armor" (*Od.* 11.40–1).

[69] Note that Agamemnon in the underworld cannot be imagined to be covered in stab wounds from his murder, for Odysseus asks him whether he was killed in battle or drowned (*Od.* 11.397–403).

[70] Note, too, that grave goods did not picture the animate dead as injured, but as they were in life or as winged souls (Vermeule 1979, 1–23).

[71] On deictics in tragedy pointing out stage material, like props (or in this case, a costume), see Mueller 2016, 7, and on Clytemnestra's net-trap-robe theme, 42–69. On Aeschylus' use of terrifying costumes for the Erinyes from later evidence, see the *Vita Aeschyli* 9 (= TGF 3 T A1.30–32 Radt) with discussion in Calder 1988; and Frontisi-Ducroux 2007, 165–74.

sight for the internal audience, the Erinyes: they either see Clytemnestra's Ghost in a dream, or do not see her at all, since they appear to be paying attention exclusively to their chase of Orestes, himself in an invisible dream. Moreover, the command "see!" works differently for the theatrical audience, who presumably see a costumed representation of a dream.[72] This is therefore more than a simple reference to stage machinery: the audience must treat either a portrayal of wounds on her costume, or even nothing at all, as the *invisible dream* of wounds on the image of an animate corpse.[73] The effect is that of a hall of mirrors and transparencies, which draws attention to the very nature of this character's visibility.[74] The compromised wounds indicate a sophisticated piece of metatheater: the Ghost's reference to her costume implicates spectatorship and locates the production of dramatic meaning in non-literal seeing.[75] Additionally, even the audience must see them in the "mind's eye" or, as the Ghost puts it, "heart." That is, regardless of their visual presence on a costume, for their ethical effect they must be *felt*.

The Ghost of Clytemnestra's staging and language advertise that the character before the audience is only the façade of a human being, a mere dream of demons. The layers of precarious visibility and ambiguous presence comprise the multiple removes between the ethical appeals of the Ghost and those of living characters. These fissures in her language of self-reference thus undermine one basis of her imperative for vengeance. Crucially, the Ghost herself seems almost aware of it.[76] Her very vocabulary of dreams and visibility simultaneously destabilizes presence, center, and

[72] Ostensibly it is each Erinys who must see the wounds with her mind's eye in *Eu.* 103 (Sommerstein 1989, *ad loc.*). However, as in every utterance onstage, the Ghost is simultaneously addressing the audience.

[73] It is significant in this context that the Erinyes themselves were previously invisible abstractions who are now staged characters. They draw the audience's attention to the nature of the dramatized image; see Bacon 2001, 57; and Zeitlin 1965, 488–98.

[74] Johnston 1999, 24–5, relates the problem of image in Greek social and religious attitudes about ghosts to the nature of tragedy as a genre: "The ghost—the *eidōlon,* the *skia,* the *phasma*, that thing that is here in front of our eyes and yet not really here—emblematizes quite nicely the slippage between reality and illusion that tragedy loved."

[75] This example of Aeschylean metatheater is subtle, but operates like the more explicit examples in later playwrights that have drawn far more attention from scholars. It corresponds to the focus of the second wave of metatheatrical studies of Greek tragedy sketched out in Dunn 2010, 5–6, the subtle use of stage properties as empty signs that can be filled with meaning, but also draw attention to the dramatic illusion; cf. Zeitlin 1990, 63–96, and 2010, esp. 266–7; and Mueller 2016, 1–8.

[76] On the use of metafictional or metatheatrical self-awareness as a device to connect with the theatrical audience, see Ringer 1998, 7–19; Dobrov 2001, 4–18; and Dunn 2010, 5–17.

reality, a set of obfuscations that extends the rhetorical mastery of the living Clytemnestra. This is part of the Ghost's double move to support her ethical claims through linguistic manipulation: she makes dubious assertions but blurs their structure to avoid refutation.

VI. THE "MOTHER OF HADES": INVENTING AND WARPING THE AFTERLIFE

The Ghost's uncorroborated story of her own afterlife (*Eu.* 95–8) ought to arouse just as much suspicion as her phantom wounds. Her narration is reminiscent of the rhetorical techniques the living queen used to manipulate Agamemnon. After the act Clytemnestra straightforwardly admitted to having used deceptive language (*Ag.* 1372–3), yet duplicity was not her only tool. For the sake of vindicating her action to the Chorus of the *Agamemnon* she also invented an underworld tale. In her response to the Elders' question concerning who will grieve for the dead king, Clytemnestra described an ironic scene: Iphigenia—the daughter Agamemnon bound, gagged, and slaughtered—embraces and kisses him in the house of Hades (1555–9, cf. 1525–9).[77] The living Clytemnestra's verbal creation of a post-mortem scene clarifies the Ghost's later depiction of the underworld in two ways: first, she justified Agamemnon's slaying by appealing to their daughter's continuity after death. That is, Iphigenia's non-disappearance implies an ethical basis for requital on her behalf. Second, imagining Agamemnon's facing the daughter he killed in the afterlife strengthened Clytemnestra's argument that her act is only a segment of a greater cycle of punishment that includes superhuman elements, such as the curse of the house and underworld suffering.[78] The image she created of Iphigenia (whom she names in *Ag.* 1527 and 1555) waiting to embrace her murderous father ties into the assertion by the Ghost that those she killed (presumably Agamemnon and Cassandra, although she suppresses their names) relentlessly hound her in the afterlife (*Eu.* 95–8). Now it is Clytemnestra's Ghost who fears an embrace by the victims of

[77] Garner 1990, 36, catches the ironic reversal in this fantasy embrace and draws attention to the Homeric allusion in the phrase Clytemnestra uses (περὶ χεῖρα βαλοῦσα, *Ag.* 1559): this is almost precisely how Odysseus describes his fruitless attempt to embrace his mother's shade (περὶ χεῖρε βαλόντε, *Od.* 11.211; cf. *Od.* 11.392–4 and *Il.* 23.75 and 99–101).

[78] See Neuburg 1991 and Foley 2001, 211–34, on the living Clytemnestra's stated motivations: human, from her own reasons, on the one hand, and divine, as part of the curse of the house, on the other. On the double-determination principle at work in Greek tragedy in general and in the *Or.* in particular, see Sommerstein 2010, 262–7.

murder, effectively reversing the imagined familial reunion scene between Agamemnon and Iphigenia. The character of Clytemnestra (living and dead) conjoins human relations in the afterlife to murderous action in both these depictions: in the *Agamemnon* as part of justifying her killing after the fact, in the *Eumenides* to activate the Erinyes for vengeance.

Linking the ideas of involvement with the afterlife and rhetorical invention is Cassandra's moniker for Clytemnestra, a "mother of Hades" (Ἅιδου μητέρ', *Ag.* 1235).[79] Clytemnestra's Ghost is strongly conjoined to Hades, presumably appearing from that realm (cf. the Ghost of Darius in *Pers.* 607–842). But since she is the only source for her own afterlife, it is crucial to note that her depiction of it in the *Eumenides* only correlates with her own in the *Agamemnon*, not with any other mentions of the afterlife in the trilogy. Conspicuously absent is any acknowledgment of a divine system of moral punishment: Clytemnestra's Ghost does not describe hounding in life by divine spirits of vengeance and subsequent retribution in the afterlife, which is the worldview articulated by the Elders of the *Agamemnon* (*Ag.* 461–8). Nor does her tale corroborate the Erinyes' description of the afterlife in the *Eumenides*, in which the chthonic goddesses themselves drag mortals down to punishment by Hades (*Eu.* 267–75). This Great Assessor of humankind (μέγας . . . εὔθυνος βροτῶν, 273) is said to punish every mortal who transgresses (τις . . . ἥλιτεν βροτῶν, 269).[80] Hades, though, does not figure into Clytemnestra's afterlife. The Erinyes even claim to Orestes that Clytemnestra is "free by virtue of being murdered" (ἡ δ' ἐλευθέρα φόνῳ, *Eu.* 603), effectively eliminating from consideration the issue of her continuing punishment. Thus the play gives ethical room for Clytemnestra to make her arguments. Even as the Ghost seeks help from universal forces of requital, her representation of her afterlife evades the possibility that she is subject to continuing divine punishment for her murders.

Instead of ethical punishment by divinities, the Ghost of Clytemnestra recounts a far more personal ordeal in the underworld. Part of her rhetoric even attempts to move the Erinyes to pity her suffering (κοὐ κατοικτίζεις πάθος, 121; cf. παθοῦσα, 100).[81] She portrays herself as the

[79]The phrase may be taken in many ways, including references to her own murders against her kin, to Iphigeneia, and to her ties to destructive forces more generally, cf. Denniston and Page 1957, *ad loc.*; Zeitlin 1966, 646–52; and Rabinowitz 1981, 156–67.

[80]This description specifically includes the crime of a child against a parent (*Eu.* 270–1), which fits the Erinyes' addressee, Orestes, if not Clytemnestra.

[81]This emphasis on suffering loops back to the living queen's speech to Agamemnon, where her tendentious story of torment in his absence was one of her rhetorical ploys (*Ag.* 855–913); cf. Foley 2001, 209. Once invoked, however, the Erinyes are implacable until

victim, not only of Orestes, but of other dead below. In this, as in a number of other ways, she is akin to the Ghost of Patroclus. In his narrative the dead are an umbrageous multitude that crowd him away from the house of Hades: "but I wander purposelessly" (ἀλλ᾽ αὔτως ἀλάλημαι, *Il.* 23.74). When the Ghost of Clytemnestra laments "and I wander shamefully" (αἰσχρῶς δ᾽ ἀλῶμαι, *Eu.* 98) she employs the same verb (ἀλάομαι) and even echoes the alliteration—an intriguing reminiscence of the Homeric scene. Significantly, she replaces the notion of simple exclusion with active shame. Her rhetoric, therefore, involves the concern with one particular aspect of society, extended to the world below: her Ghost links αἰσχρῶς ("shamefully," 98) and αἰτία ("responsibility, guilt, blame," 99) with ὄνειδος ("shame, reproach," 97), which is used more often in this scene than in the rest of the trilogy combined.[82] Together, these words strongly imply a community with social norms.[83]

Both in life and in the afterlife, however, Clytemnestra defies communal mores, twisting the normal sense of shame and responsibility.[84] The terms αἰσχρῶς, αἰτία, and ὄνειδος might seem to indicate that Clytemnestra is facing humiliating punishment below.[85] Yet the Ghost actively revises the meaning of ὄνειδος in her next lines. She minimizes its connection with "shame," redirecting its force towards its other meaning, "reproach." With this reproach she incites the Erinyes to kill on her behalf: "feel pain in your liver from just reproaches" (ἄλγησον ἦπαρ ἐνδίκοις ὀνείδεσιν, *Eu.* 135). This is the Ghost's only mention of any form of the term *dikē*, "justice." She uses it solely to intensify her admonitions against the Erinyes,

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the death of their victim (e.g., *Eu.* 415–23), and the Ghost herself emphasizes their evil, destructive nature (e.g., *Eu.* 125).

[82] Compare the three uses of ὄνειδος in this section of less than 60 lines with only two in the rest of the *Or.* (*Ag.* 1560 and *Ch.* 495).

[83] See Williams 1993, 75–102, for a discussion of Greek notions of heroic honor and shame (in Greek tragedy especially) as an internalized force—instead of simply social pressure—but one that can always potentially come from an agent outside of the self. On the notion of responsibility in the vocabulary of αἰτία in Greek thought more generally, see 50–8; cf. Cairns 1993, esp. 178–214, on Aeschylus.

[84] Cairns 1993, 204–6; and Foley 2001, 201–34. Goldhill 1984, 89–91, links the rhetoric of Clytemnestra's appropriated κράτος, "power/political power," and lack of αἰσχύνη, "shame," with that of her transgressive language and sexuality.

[85] Vogel-Ehrensperger 2012, 304 and 336–7, among others, treats this shame and dishonor as Clytemnestra's punishment and the mark of her final defeat, without reference to how the Ghost manipulates these very terms to continue her claims through the Erinyes.

rather than claiming that the act of vengeance she calls for is just.[86] As part of her avoidance of ethical responsibility the Ghost redirects the negative pressure of her vocabulary to create an imperative for murder.

Instead of justice or societal good, the Ghost's rhetoric focuses value purely on herself. Her appeal to the Erinyes is partly grounded on the argument that the lack of vengeance causes her dishonor (ἀπητιμασμένη, 95).[87] The Ghost attempts to protect her "honor" in a manner that neglects the other crucial aspects of τιμή, both "office" and "duty." She intends no reciprocal contribution to society, as is necessary when honor operates in the living world. Clytemnestra's Ghost rather links her honor and dishonor to the Erinyes.[88] She reminds the dark deities of her nighttime offerings (106–9) for which they now owe her this pursuit. Ironically, she herself invokes duty by urging the Erinyes to perform their assigned functions (πέπρωται πρᾶγμα, 125), which they continually connect with their own "honor" and "dishonor."[89] In disconnecting honor from duty, the Ghost thus differentiates herself from the Erinyes, who several times articulate their function as valuable in the largest schema of the social order, and whose acceptance of honors in Athens leads them to abandon her cause.

These problematic elements together compromise the afterlife that Clytemnestra's Ghost narrates as a foundation for her ethical claims. With her appeal to another realm, the Ghost provides herself an "elsewhere" that is free from the socio-political mores of Argos (and Athens).[90] She can thus ignore the reciprocal relations involved in words like "shame" and "honor," and convolute the meanings of these terms for her own ends. She depicts her suffering below, but instead of the conclusion others might draw from it—that this is divine or human punishment

[86] The living Clytemnestra, by contrast, consistently emphasized the rightness of her acts, even claiming the goddess Justice was on her side after killing Agamemnon (e.g., *Ag.* 1432); cf. Foley 2001, 201–34.

[87] Her protest echoes the "dishonor" (ἀτίμους *Ch.* 443, cf. 94, 408, and 485) that the Chorus of the *Ch.* attributes to Agamemnon and his children; see Sommerstein 1989, 101–2, n. 95.

[88] ἐγὼ δ' ὑφ' ὑμῶν ὧδ' ἀπητιμασμένη, "I, dishonored thus by you" (*Eu.* 95), or "thanks to you," as, e.g., Sommerstein 1989 and 2008b translates.

[89] E.g., *Eu.* 394, 780, 792, 796, 807, 824, 838, 845, and 853–4.

[90] The Ghost's treatment of the afterlife as an "elsewhere" is analogous to what Zeitlin 1986 identifies in the classic analysis of the theatrical setting of Thebes (and Argos) as a "site of displacement" for Athens; cf. Kurke 2013.

for her crimes—she twists it into motivation for further familial bloodshed. Evident in the Ghost's afterlife story are the connections to the living Clytemnestra's duplicity. These, alongside her arguments from individual dishonor and her tendentious interpretation of "reproach," all undercut her ethical appeals. Moreover, the *Eumenides* itself takes the transformation of reproach even further, since the Erinyes *only* refer to Clytemnestra as the "reproach from dreams" (ὄνειδος ἐξ ὀνειράτων, 155; cf. Vogel-Ehrensperger 2012, 308 n. 1126). "Reproach" thus comes to replace Clytemnestra's name, which is never spoken by any character again. The Ghost makes specific linguistic moves to transform social pressure into vengeance, using the same vocabulary with which the other characters write her out of the play.

VII. SPEAKING FOR HER VERY SOUL

The Ghost of Clytemnestra loses. Once the *Eumenides* moves to Athens, Athena uses civic, collective language to overturn the kingship and kinship structures of Argos. The ending of the trilogy deliberately shifts its focus away from individual characters and thus from "the living and the dead" Clytemnestra's personal arguments. It would be irresponsible to the ethical claims of tragic characters, however, to simply accept their dramatic fate. Tragic characters routinely suffer ignominious endings, sometimes without redeeming reversals. For an ethically responsible reading one must integrate the perspective of the character involved. It is thus imperative to heed how the Ghost of Clytemnestra marks the stakes of her ethical appeals. She does so in an extraordinarily condensed manner, with a striking use of the term *psychē* (*Eu.* 114–5):

> ἀκούσαθ' ὡς ἔλεξα τῆς ἐμῆς περὶ
> ψυχῆς·
>
> Hear me, as I have spoken for my very soul!

The phrase "for my very *psychē*" summarizes the Ghost's pleading. Yet the term *psychē* here involves a problem of self-reference, besides those of dream and insubstantiality discussed earlier. Whereas in Homeric afterlife scenes *psychē* denoted the ghosts and dead themselves, the Ghost of Clytemnestra never refers to herself as a *psychē*. Instead, her language here objectifies her *psychē*, preventing it from being identified with her speaking self. The phrase itself, doing something περὶ ψυχῆς, is only found a few times before Aeschylus, but in each instance means "defending

one's life from death."[91] Needless to say, this gloss is utterly incongruous in the current context: the dead Clytemnestra no longer has any life to save. Aeschylus, through this poetic paradox, forces his audiences to seek a different interpretation.

Consideration of the concerns of Homeric ghosts suggests that, although they never explicitly declare it, they could be thought of as speaking "on account of" or "for the benefit of" their *psychē*, in the sense of improving their soul's condition in the afterlife. This interpretation rests on the demand of the Ghost of Patroclus and the Ghost of Elpenor for ritual burial, which would provide their *psychai* entry into the realm of Hades. As a basis for her claims, the Ghost of Clytemnestra does appeal to the cultural mores of obligation to the dead. Yet through her unparalleled use of περὶ ψυχῆς she demands the spilling of kindred blood for "the benefit of her soul."[92] Unlike the Homeric ghosts, then, the Ghost of Clytemnestra returns to provoke a cultural transgression. She thus undercuts the positive societal functions of ritual, instead twisting the claims of the dead against the living. In extant epic and tragic literature, she is the first Ghost to directly demand her own vengeance.[93]

[91] The analysis here expands on Sommerstein 1989, *ad loc.*: "this plays on two senses of ψυχή. Normally, to speak or run or fight περὶ ψυχῆς meant to do so 'for one's life, with one's life at stake' (e.g., *Il.* 22.161; *Od.* 22.245; and Eur. *Hel.* 946) . . . only since (Clytemnestra) is dead, she has not been speaking 'for my life' but 'for <the welfare of> my spirit' (also ψυχή)." On the normal use of the term *psychē*, etymologically connected with breath (Chantraine 1968–80, Beekes and Beek 2010), "only when there is a question of life and death," see Burkert 1985, 195–6. Dindorf 1876, for example, categorizes this passage under "*vita*" along with *Ag.* 965 and *Ag.* 1465–7.

[92] Her language never refers to funeral ritual or any of the possible salvation rituals in the Greek world, such as the Eleusinian mysteries. For an attempt to find mystery vocabulary in the *Or.* see Thomson 1935. Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, 231–51, analyzes the rituals inside the *Or.* in relation to their religious context in the greater Dionysia festival, but counterpoises the fact that this trilogy emphasizes human relationships more than previous tragedies, which she terms "religious."

[93] Johnston 1999, 7–32, lays out the evidence for the increasing influence of the dead from relatively weak in Homer to active in the world in tragedy, covering the extant examples of ghostly demands in literature. Bardel 2005, 92, argues, from later evidence, that Aeschylus was the first to bring *eidōla* onstage. This is not to claim that our extant sources are the only literary ghosts to which the Athenian audience had ever been exposed. For example, Aeschylus' fragmentary *Psychagogoi* ("Ghost-Raisers"), of uncertain date, is connected with the *Odyssey*'s journey to the underworld; cf. Henrichs 1991, 187–92; Moreno 2004, 7–29; Cousin 2005, 137–52, who compares the fragments to the Homeric Nekyia, other Aeschylean scenes, and vase-painting; Bardel 2005, 85–92; and Sommerstein 2008c, 269–73, and 2010, 249–50.

Aeschylus' treatment of two other dead rulers serves to clarify the point concerning Clytemnestra's desired change of status in the afterlife. First, a contrast with the *Persians*: in the earliest extant Aeschylean ghost scene, King Darius is actively raised by others in a ritual, speaks for himself, and emphasizes his honor in the underworld (*Pers.* 607–842). The Ghost of Darius is, in fact, called a *psychē* (ψυχήν, 630). He does interact with the living world by repeatedly demonstrating concern about the Persian state (e.g., πόλις, 682) and his son (e.g., 739–51). He even imparts insight to the elders about the change of values at death, sententiously advising them (and thus the theatrical audience) to "give pleasure to your soul" (ψυχῇ διδόντες ἡδονήν, 841) because wealth is of no use to the dead (τοῖς θανοῦσι, 842).[94] Nevertheless, he does not ask anyone to act on his behalf—pointedly, he does not seek vengeance against the Greeks. Moreover, unlike the Ghosts of Patroclus, Elpenor, and Clytemnestra, the Ghost of Darius does not demand any action that might affect his underworld state. He does not need to: he himself declares his power in the underworld (688–92) and the language and rituals in the scene attest to his honor above.[95] This provides a stark antithesis to the afterlife dishonor and powerlessness of which the Ghost of Clytemnestra complains and the benefit she seeks through vengeance.

On the opposite end of the spectrum from Darius, two previous scenes of the *Oresteia*—both related to the murdered Agamemnon—contain themes that parallel the Ghost of Clytemnestra's concern. The first, following the king's killing, demonstrates the robust link in the *Oresteia*'s language between proper ritual and actual benefit to the *psychē* (*Ag*. 1543–6):

> ἦ σὺ τόδ' ἔρξαι τλήσῃ, κτείνασ'
> ἄνδρα τὸν αὑτῆς ἀποκωκῦσαι
> ψυχῇ τ' ἄχαριν χάριν ἀντ' ἔργων
> μεγάλων ἀδίκως ἐπικρᾶναι;
>
> Chor.: Will you dare to do this: having slain your own husband,
> to bewail him and unjustly perform a graceless grace for his soul
> in return for his great accomplishments?

[94] Sourvinou-Inwood 2003, 223–7, explores the gulf between what the audience would have seen as the foolhardy behavior of Darius while alive and the wisdom of his Ghost, which an audience could interpret as the result of his change of status after death and nearness to the divine.

[95] Muntz 2011, 257–71, analyzes the raising scene as a mixture between a necromantic ritual and the worship of Darius as divine.

The Argive Elders deny that Clytemnestra can properly perform the burial rites for Agamemnon, having murdered him. While their main emphasis is on Clytemnestra's unholy actions, the oxymoron "graceless grace" (ἄχαριν χάριν, 1545) demonstrates that the Chorus intend for the "grace" (χάριν) of ritual lamentation to benefit the *psychē* (ψυχῇ) of Agamemnon. That is, although the Elders use a phrase (ψυχῇ . . . χάριν) synonymous to the Ghost of Clytemnestra's later περὶ ψυχῆς, they clearly refer to ritual, rather than to vengeance on his behalf.

The second relevant example from the *Oresteia* responds to the abased burial that Clytemnestra proceeds to give Agamemnon.[96] The Chorus of Slave Women, Orestes, and Electra in the *kommos* scene of the *Choephoroi* (306–513) restore to Agamemnon his lost ritual lamentation, but also attempt to go far beyond.[97] They endeavor to raise Agamemnon from the dead (e.g., *Ch*. 315–22, 456, and 459) or gain his power (e.g., 244–5, 479–80, and 490). The Slave Women, moreover, accentuate the divide between what ought be Agamemnon's position as a king honored in the underworld (354–62) and his actual burial as a mutilated (ἐμασχαλίσθη, 439) and dishonored (ἀτίμους, 443) corpse.[98] They use this disparity to inflame his progeny to vengeance.[99] The children in turn promise their father future household rituals for his help in killing Clytemnestra (483–8). The relationships to dead Agamemnon that the Chorus and his children create rely on vengeance in the living world to alter Agamemnon's fate after death. Every character in the scene appears to accept that kin-killing, and not merely the correct rituals for Agamemnon, can effect the change of status they desire for his afterlife. The afterlife benefit the Ghost of Clytemnestra seeks by having Orestes killed mirrors the benefit to Agamemnon's afterlife that the mourners previously used to justify killing her.

[96] Hame 2004, esp. 524–7, clarifies the precise nature of Agamemnon's dishonored burial by demonstrating that at each stage Clytemnestra has subverted traditional Greek ritual; cf. Seaford 1984.

[97] McClure 1999, 70–1, points out that Clytemnestra uses almost no ritual language—particularly striking is her lack of lamentation.

[98] The Chorus, in *Ch.* 354–62, describe Agamemnon as sitting on a throne in the underworld among the glorious war dead, but leave it grammatically unclear whether they are claiming this is his actual state, or merely potentially the case if he is avenged. On the grammatical point, see Garvie 1986, *ad loc.* On ἐμασχαλίσθη, see Dunn 2018.

[99] Zeitlin 1965, 496, suggests that the Chorus here attempts to rouse sufficient fury in Orestes to kill his mother. In this they would be acting similarly to Clytemnestra's Ghost goading the Erinyes; cf. Rosenmeyer 1982, 163–73; Deforge 1986, 276–7; McCall 1990, 21–7; Bacon 2001, 52–3; and Vogel-Ehrensperger 2012, 306 n. 1120.

The Ghost of Clytemnestra epitomizes the "old justice" of unending vengeance, even from beyond the grave. She disregards entirely the social aspect of ritual closure, evident in the Elders' concern for civic mourning in the *Agamemnon* and the more private concern for household mourning in the *Choephoroi*. Instead, the Ghost of Clytemnestra focuses on murderous acts, ignores civic or familial obligations, and never mentions a desire for ritual lamentation. The reasons she proffers for vengeance, in their focus on her pain and dishonor, also differ from the universal claims the Erinyes make in Orestes' trial, ostensibly on her behalf. She is acting for personal ends, for her own *psychē*.

VIII. CONCLUSION: THE ETHICAL CLAIMS OF A CHARACTER BEYOND HUMAN LIMITS

How can the Ghost of Clytemnestra be understood as a challenge to ethical thought? At every turn, the dead queen undercuts the bases of normative ethics, tearing at the social fabric with her claims and actions. The Ghost of Clytemnestra stands out from previous undead figures in Homer and tragedy by explicitly seeking a change in her afterlife honor based not on ritual but on vengeance. Unlike them, also, her living character has already been condemned ethically as a murderer, kin-killer, and liar. The living queen deceived through language, took control of the house, and violently subverted the state. For this she was killed by her own children. That is, in part her own actions and in part her murder by family severed the bonds required for ritual burial, with its positive effects of memory, social reintegration, and a certain sense of closure. Yet despite these seemingly irredeemable issues with her living character, her post-mortem fate could have unrolled differently. She could have never appeared at all and become whitewashed over time, like Agamemnon, who—despite his murderous transgression against his household—does eventually receive familial lament and honors.[100] Even as a Ghost, she could have returned from the underworld reformed, chastised by punishment, or only demanding proper ritual.[101] Yet the Ghost of Clytemnestra

[100] In the *Ch.* Agamemnon regains his cultic honors from his household (*Ch.* 483–8). Redemptions of Clytemnestra begin already with Euripides, including Helen sending libations to her grave in the *Orestes*. On the changing receptions of Clytemnestra, see Hall 2005.

[101] At the end of the *Ag.*, for example, Clytemnestra acts to mollify further conflicts, shifting the representation of her character; cf. Foley 2001, 228–9.

rises implacable, raging about her dishonor, and calling for kindred blood. Her reappearance as a ghost thus pushes the social problems inherent in the living Clytemnestra's self-centered actions to their logical limits.

The Ghost's exceptional challenge is only intensified by her problematic arguments. The emphasis on her status as a dream leads to questions about how far her body can be denatured before her arguments from physical wounds become insubstantial as well. Exactly at those points when she seems to engage emotion most immediately—wounds seen in the heart, underworld shame as an unavenged mother—her language reveals the shifting nature of its referents. Each key phrase the Ghost utters disintegrates its presumed signified: her wounds are not wounds, her disgrace is not punishment for her acts, and her afterlife depiction fits no one else's in the trilogy. Controlling the narrative and eluding all mores frees the Ghost of Clytemnestra to reinterpret her "shame" and "dishonor" in the afterlife, not as punishments for her transgressions, but as reproaches against the Erinyes themselves. Her story of the afterlife and continuing rhetorical mastery enable her to warp even these sufferings into markers of an ethical imbalance in duty that must be corrected in her favor.

The living queen, bereft of political and physical power, had to rely on language to weave an entrapping web and overturn the social order.[102] While repugnant for her actions, her dramatic and rhetorical mastery captivated audiences internal and external.[103] As a Ghost, Clytemnestra is again innovative with her oratory, even depicting a similar underworld scenario to the one the living queen created for Agamemnon. Clytemnestra, when living, wrote her own play, carefully scripting the return of Agamemnon to include an act of impiety and to culminate in her long-planned vengeance. Analogously, her Ghost breaks the frame of the drama:[104] she metatheatrically directs the action onstage by rousing the

[102] The living Clytemnestra's linguistic potency shares many features with feminine forces marked as monstrous and disruptive in myths of masculine, divine order, which are consequently suppressed, as Rabinowitz 1981 demonstrates comprehensively; cf. Zeitlin 1978.

[103] Betensky 1978 rightly connects the dramatic force of the living Clytemnestra with her inventive language both within the play and for the theatrical audience. Cf. Pucci 1998, 131, on Odysseus as narrator and fabricator of his own tale.

[104] Ringer 1998, ix–x and 8–12, argues that creative characters who act as directors, role play, and deceive are part of a suite of devices in Sophocles for breaking boundaries by calling attention to dramatic illusions and simultaneously creating connections for audiences with their own cultural background (e.g., with the contemporary *polis*, the theater, and the festival setting).

Chorus.[105] She flickers with self-awareness, with an understanding that she is a dream and knowledge of another, invisible dream. The living Clytemnestra masterfully manipulated language; the Ghost of Clytemnestra extends this rhetorical mastery to the image of herself, to her depiction of life beyond death, and to her allusions to the theatrical illusion.

Throughout, Clytemnestra has no divine support, no prophet, oracle, or command from the gods as Agamemnon and Orestes have. Even her champions, the Erinyes, who at first take her ethical claims seriously, eventually abandon her. They shift to themselves the vocabulary of reproach and honor that the Ghost uses. They generalize Clytemnestra's claims and disavow her singularity. Despite their corrupt femininity, despite their connection with blood and punishment that made them abhorrent, they gain honor from Athena.[106] It becomes evident over the rest of the *Eumenides*—as the other characters mute Clytemnestra's name and undercut her role as mother and queen—that the new social system and justice of Athena is meant to suppress Clytemnestra.[107] Within the context of the trilogy as a whole, Clytemnestra's claims are compromised and then forsaken.

It is precisely the abandonment by all humans and divinities that the Ghost complains of, and, through force of personality, returns from the dead to resist. In asking to right a wrong done to an individual, the Ghost reengages the living Clytemnestra's multidimensional character.[108] For the living queen was not, by any means, a flat villain, but challenged a system that oppressed women and killed her daughter.[109] To recognize the full power of Clytemnestra's tragic personality is to see that she keeps

[105] Cioffi 2015 suggestively likens Clytemnestra's Ghost to a chorus leader, even to a *choregos* directing the Erinyes, which hints at metatheatrical possibilities from a different angle; cf. Vogel-Ehrensperger 2012, 303–8.

[106] Brown 1983, 34, sees the whole *Eu.* as changing the terms of the debate from the previous human cycle of retribution to a wholly divine issue, only resolved by conversion of the Erinyes; cf. Sewell-Rutter 2007, 79–109.

[107] Foley 2001, 201–34, demonstrates that, even though the living Clytemnestra justifies herself and demands to be treated comparably to male autonomous agents, judgment in the *Or.* always ends up being given along gendered lines; cf. Winnington-Ingram 1948; McClure 1999, 70–92; and Zeitlin 1965, 589–93.

[108] See Easterling 1973, 3–7, on stage-presence and entanglement in relatable human dilemmas as criteria for emotionally credible characters in tragedy, with specific reference to the *Or.*

[109] Zeitlin 1990, 68–9, condenses the problems that women pose in Greek cultural representations, especially tragedy, as always a radical Other in a male dominated society, never an end in themselves, which their deaths display; cf. Loraux 1987, 1–3.

fighting the lost fight, even after death.[110] The Ghost of Clytemnestra names herself and calls out, implicating internal and external audiences.[111] When she narrates her experience in the underworld with the first-person singular, the Ghost makes a personal entreaty. Despite the compromised nature of her words, she insists that her hearers "*listen*" in all seriousness, since she is "*speaking* for her very soul."

By the very act of locution dramatic characters demand ethical respect for their hypostasis. Some have declared it a fundamental of drama, the imperative to count the persona, *prosōpon*, mask, or character, as a person, not merely as a means to further plot, dramatic tension, or an idea.[112] Direct address fuses the necessity to attend to the ethical claims of the living Clytemnestra with her story of continuation in the afterlife, narrated in a dream. In speaking, the Ghost awakens not only the sleeping Erinyes but anyone who hears.[113] The Ghost's words thus implicate each individual audience member in the (over)heard command to listen, to "see," to imagine in one's heart. Clytemnestra—dead, dreamt—is calling out to us.

Although the *Oresteia* stands so early in the Western theatrical tradition, its Ghost scene forces a continual reconsideration of a dramatic character and her speaking acts. As a formerly living human who now lacks substance, yet has speaking presence, who must motivate through argument, image, and story-telling, the Ghost darkly illuminates tragedy's ability to raise serious ethical issues.[114] The Ghost eloquently

[110] Vellacott 1984b, 62–75, among others, claims Clytemnestra is the real "tragic heroine" of the *Or.*; cf. Anderson 1929 and Winnington-Ingram 1948. Schelling, whose influential writings may be the first modern philosophy of tragedy, emphasizes the fight against fate as the true emblem of the tragic hero's freedom, despite his being marked as a criminal and punished by this same fate (Szondi 2002, 7–10).

[111] Κλυταιμήστρα καλῶ, *Eu.* 116; cf. προυννέπω, *Eu.* 98. The Ghost's speech thus resonates with Clytemnestra's transgressive public discourse in the *Ag.*, which has drawn much critical attention, see Zeitlin 1965, 481–3; McClure 1999, 70–80; Loraux 1987, 1–3, 21, and 26–7; and Foley 2001, 207–9.

[112] Nagy 2010, 37, theorizes one way of connecting the theatrical actor to a notion of outreach to the dramatic audience: "Just as *subjectivity* can be analyzed in terms of the *person* in *grammar*, it can also be analyzed in terms of the *persona* in *theater* . . . in Greek, the noun πρόσωπον (*prosōpon*) likewise means 'theatrical mask' . . . a subjective agent, an 'I' who is looking for a dialogue with a 'you'" (emphasis original).

[113] Altieri 1998 focuses on the "lyrical I" that cries out of literary texts and calls for ethical engagement. Critiquing Nussbaum and others who use literature to either establish ethical generalizations or supplement them, he rightly claims that listening to characters in literature encourages thinking through complexities lacking in such universalizing theories.

[114] The Ghost of Clytemnestra is thus ethically significant in complementary ways to later tragic female characters who have drawn much attention for breaking social barriers,

demands respect for herself, even after death, a respect the drama itself finally withdraws from her. Yet she represents a nexus of challenges to ethically normative theories and notions of virtuous actors. Through her, an audience confronts the possibility that human ethical claims may be valid even for a transgressor against the state, destroyer of family, and shameless deceiver, even as spoken by a character who is dead, who is harassed in the afterlife, and who speaks within a dream of demons. The Ghost of Clytemnestra's key provocation is in the tension between the estrangement she causes and the pull of her ethical appeals: she is spectral, guilty, yet human.[115]

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such as Antigone, who has credibility as a moral actor, and Medea, who has enough magical power to destroy and escape punishment; see, e.g., Foley 2001, 172–200 and 243–71.

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